

Disaster Distress Helpline

PHONE: 1-800-985-5990 TEXT: "TalkWithUs" to 66746

Coping with the Anniversary of Hurricane Sandy: **10 Things to Know**

For many, the one year anniversary of Hurricane Sandy may be met with difficult emotions and painful memories. It's also not unusual for feelings of distress to resurface almost as strongly as right after the disaster. The following tips will help you and loved ones better cope during this difficult time and know when to reach out for help.

1: Be Aware that Anniversaries May be Difficult

It's pretty common for feelings of distress (like sadness, anger, guilt) to come back or feel stronger around an anniversary. Recognizing this may help you to realize that you are not 'crazy' and to not be hard on yourself. For many people, anniversaries remind them of their losses and it may still be hard to believe any changes that have happened since the event.

2: Participate in Rituals that May Provide Soothing Comfort

Whatever those rituals are: singing, praying, watching a movie, sharing a meal, or going to a spiritual service. Attend rituals with others for community healing- there is always strength in numbers. Also remember to set aside 'me time' to let yourself reflect on what you're feeling and have moments of solitude, if needed.

3: Reach Out to Family and Friends

Talk to someone you trust about how you are doing. Even though solitude can be helpful, feeling isolated and lonely is another thing. Encourage yourself to offer or accept invitations to participate in rituals, social events, or even just to be in the company of others.

4: Talk About Your Losses if You Need To

It's normal to want to talk about your losses and the impact that Hurricane Sandy had on you, your family, property and community. Find someone who will listen and understand the changes that you have experienced over the past year. And if you prefer to think and talk about the future rather than what's happened in the past, then that's what you should do. There is no need to talk about distressing events unless YOU want to.

5: Do Things that Might Help You Deal with Overwhelming Emotions

Whatever you normally do to cope with stress, such as taking a walk, going running or being outdoors - be sure to make time to do these things in the days before and during the anniversary. You may also want to look into new outlets for processing emotions, like journaling, drawing, or picking up a new hobby.

6: Do What You Would Like to Do Rather Than What You Think You Should Do

You may feel that people may expect you to act a certain way during this time but it's important to keep in mind that things *are* different and to try not to put the needs of others before your own. Each person should spend these days in the ways that will be most helpful to themselves.

7: Pay Attention to Children and Teens

Just like adults, children and teens that have been touched by disaster will also have special needs during the anniversary of Hurricane Sandy. Be attentive to what your kids are saying or if they are behaving differently. Balance open communication with space for them to feel and process their emotions in their own ways. Kids of all ages may need familiar routines during these days while also participating in new family rituals and commemorative events.

8: Accept Kindness and Help from Others

Support makes difficult times more bearable, but there is often a tendency to resist help from others, or to believe that we don't need help. Sometimes we don't want to burden others with our problems and keep emotions bottled up, especially during difficult times like anniversaries, when you should open up to let others in.

9: Helping Others May Actually Help You

Volunteer at a commemorative event or donate your time for a cause near and dear to your heart or in memory of someone you may have lost. Helping others can affirm a sense of purpose, bring comfort and help boost self-esteem.

10: Know When to Ask for Help

Sometimes even after we've tried coping tips such as these, we still may feel distress such as:

- Trouble getting through the day and performing regular tasks like concentrating at school, work or home, caregiving responsibilities, personal hygiene, etc.
- Too much or too little sleep; not eating enough or eating too much
- Feeling isolated, numb, or like you don't care about anything
- Worrying a lot; feelings of anxiety that seem like they stay with you all the time
- Substance abuse, including excessive use of prescription meds, alcohol and tobacco
- Thoughts of hurting or killing yourself and/or others.

If you or someone you care about shows any one or more of these symptoms, **You Are Not Alone**.

The **Disaster Distress Helpline** provides 24/7/365 crisis counseling and support for anyone, anywhere in the United States: **Talk With Us!**

- Call: 1-800-985-5990 and Press "1" (toll-free & multi-lingual)
- Text: "TalkWithUs" to 66746
- Spanish-speakers can text "Hablanos" to 66746
- TTY: 1-800-846-8517

Helping others can also mean passing along these 10 Things to Know- Share with a loved one, or visit

<http://www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov/coping-tips/anniversaries-trigger-vents.aspx> for more tips.



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